



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Arizona Strip Field Office
345 East Riverside Drive
St. George, Utah 84790
www.az.blm.gov



In Reply Refer To:
8370: AZA020

RE: Public Scoping Period Announced for the Maze Rock Art Site Trailhead and Trail Environmental Assessment, Vermilion Cliffs National Monument, Arizona

Dear Interested Publics:

The Arizona Strip Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will begin work on the Maze Rock Art Site Environmental Assessment (EA) for a proposed trailhead and trail to the Maze Rock Art Site. Portions of the trail lie within the Paria Canyon-Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness and a Minimum Requirements Decision Guide (MRDG) would be prepared. Please see the attached map for the location.

Purpose and Need

Public interest in accessing a locally known public use rock art site has created a braided network of social trails leading to the Maze Rock Art Site. User creation of two separate parking areas/trailheads to access the same area is not necessary and is leading to resource degradation. Definition and construction of one parking area/trailhead outside the wilderness boundary and one trail to the rock art site would eliminate the braided social trails and resource degradation overall.

Description of current and proposed trail

A braided social trail has developed from House Rock Valley Road (Route 1065) to the Maze Rock Art Panel. The social trail begins from a user-created parking area and traverses to the top of the ridge. The trail is creating erosion and resource damage when navigating up the hillside to the top of the ridge. Once over the ridge, the trail braids across a sagebrush flat to the next ridge where the rock art site is located. A small trail has been constructed from the end of the sagebrush flat upslope to the rock art site. The proposed action is to re-route the existing social trails to a new trail which would be more direct, manageable, and reduce the current levels of erosion and resource damage.

Description of current and proposed trailhead

Visitors have created a parking area near the Paria Canyon-Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness just off of House Rock Valley Road (Route 1065). The area is located in a drainage which leaves ruts that are difficult to navigate, makes access difficult for low clearance vehicles, and the vegetation is thick and allows for minimal parking. Furthermore, parking on the House Rock Valley Road can be dangerous due to visibility, dust, road conditions, and the high amount of use. A user-created trail has been developed from this parking area that would be closed after the proposed trail and trailhead are developed. The proposed action is to create a trailhead 0.2 miles north of the current parking area. This new parking area would be safer, more accessible for low clearance vehicles, and protect surrounding vegetation. An interpretation panel would be provided at the new parking area to inform the public about the Maze Rock Art Site.

Project Goals:

- To create one trailhead in an area that will provide access to the site with minimal amounts of erosion and have adequate parking to support public safety and reduce resource damage.
- To identify and build a sustainable trail that leads visitors to the rock art site without damaging surrounding resources.
- To develop a plan for the site that includes interpretation, site layout, materials needed, and infrastructure type.

If you have comments or suggestions regarding the Maze Rock Art Site Trailhead and Trail Project, please send them no later than 3/6/15, so that they can be considered when developing the EA.

Please disclose if you wish to withhold your name and address from public review. By law, the names and addresses of those commenting along with their comments are available for public review. Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your request or comment, you should be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us to withhold your name and personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. All comments from organizations or businesses will be available for public inspection in their entirety.

If you would like to be included on the mailing list, have questions, or need additional information, contact Mitch Owens, Vermilion Cliffs National Monument Outdoor Recreation Planner, at (435) 688-3331, email to mownes@blm.gov, or mail to the above address.

Sincerely,

Lorraine M. Christian

Lorraine M. Christian
Field Manager

Attachment: Map of Maze Rock Art Site Project

